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ABSTRACT

This report presents eight different approaches adapted by schools to dramatically raise student achievement. The schools combine comprehensive, whole-school change with systems-level restructuring to help a large proportion of schools around the country achieve excellence. The eight programs include (1) ATLAS (Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for all Students) Communities, which use pathways that serve as feeder patterns of schools serving students from prekindergarten to grade 12; (2) Purpose-Centered Education, which focuses all student learning on a complex and meaningful "purpose"; (3) Co-NECT schools, which provide a comprehensive, technology-supported framework for school restructuring; (4) Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, which focuses on "learning expeditions" developed by teachers in each school; (5) the Los Angeles Learning Centers, a comprehensive kindergarten-through-12 model organized around curriculum, learning supports, and management; (6) Modern Red Schoolhouse, which encourages teachers to identify and nurture each child's potential; (7) the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, a partnership of states, school districts, and national organizations; and (8) Roots and Wings, a comprehensive restructuring program for elementary schools. (RJM)

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ED 420 896

Working Towards Excellence:

Results From Schools Implementing New American Schools Designs

September 1997

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INTRODUCTION

New American Schools

Working Towards Excellence: Results From Schools Implementing New American Schools Designs

Introduction

Across America, educators are helping students reach high standards. Over 700 schools in 30 states have joined the New American Schools partnership to create schools that embody the best principles and practices of education, and ensure there are places in this country where good schools are the norm, not the exception.

Research by the RAND Corporation, which evaluates the New American Schools effort, indicates that most schools need help to make the kinds of changes necessary to dramatically raise student achievement. The eight New American Schools Design Teams and other comprehensive school assistance organizations provide that help. They work with teachers and administrators to build and execute a solid plan for strengthening teaching and learning environments and aligning all elements of schooling around a shared vision of excellence. When districts and states commit to supporting the work of schools and Design Teams by dismantling the barriers that inhibit their ability to transform teaching and learning, the results are impressive.

Some New American Schools have been involved in the partnership for four years--these are the schools that were involved in the initial demonstration phase of the designs. Others have joined within the last year or two, as the Design Teams have scaled up their work. In terms of results for students, the early evidence is promising. This booklet shares some of that evidence. One important early result is the recognition that no one partner can accomplish this mission alone. Schools; Design Teams; districts; states; local partners like teachers' associations, business coalitions, and community groups; and external partners like New American Schools must all take responsibility for making hard decisions, taking bold action, and holding themselves accountable for achieving one shared mission: significantly improved student performance. Without this sense of shared responsibility, no reform can succeed.

New American Schools represents an unprecedented effort to bring together comprehensive, whole-school change with systems-level restructuring to help a large proportion of schools around the country achieve excellence. The information on the following pages reflects the progress made so far. It focuses on both instructional and organizational strategies for improvement within schools.

New American Schools Designs: Built on Solid Evidence

Each New American Schools design offers a schoolwide vision and a clear implementation plan to

guide the long and intense process of transformation. These whole-school designs give focus to a school's reform efforts and unify teachers, administrators, parents, and students to work together towards common goals.

Although each design is unique, they are all research-based and incorporate some common effective educational practices geared toward helping schools improve student achievement. Most importantly, each design is focused on providing ongoing, high-quality professional development opportunities for teachers. This *design-based assistance* includes on-site work with teachers in their classrooms and in their schools; retreats and institutes that provide intensive forums to work on improving instruction and strengthening curriculum; concrete materials to support design implementation; and on-line help with day-to-day questions.

In addition, each design provides opportunities for teachers to work with one another. Teachers in the same school collaborate through common planning time and shared professional development activities. They also have the opportunity to collaborate with teachers in other schools implementing the same design through on-line discussions, cross-site visits, and national conferences.

Finally, the Design Teams, along with New American Schools staff, work with districts to help them create policies and practices that support the work of transforming schools.

A number of important research reports released recently underscore the importance of practices like these. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future released its report, entitled "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future," in September 1997. The report stated that a coherent professional development infrastructure is essential to build the skills and knowledge of current and future teachers. Such an infrastructure includes professional development that is organized around achievement standards and that gives teachers access to stable and high-quality sources of assistance. Further, the report noted that successful school districts invest in the quality of teaching by directing more resources to the school level and helping schools focus those resources on placing highly-trained professionals in classrooms, bringing technology into schools, and reducing the numbers of non-teaching staff in schools.

In a 1996 study titled "Ten Promising Programs for Educating *All* Children: Evidence of Impact," which looked at the implementation of promising school reform programs, Sam Stringfield and Rebecca Herman of Johns Hopkins University wrote that whole-school reform appeared to be more effective at improving student learning than pull-out programs. In addition, the authors note that ongoing, program-specific technical assistance clearly was linked to positive results. Importantly, Stringfield and Herman also concluded that schools are much more successful at implementing reform programs in the context of a supportive environment, both within the school and the district.

The "Third International Mathematics and Science Study," (TIMSS) released in 1996, provided

insight into the need for American schools to upgrade curriculum and instruction to meet international levels of achievement. Most schools will need assistance to make the major changes recommended by TIMSS including organizing curriculum to focus on depth, not breadth; changing classroom instruction to emphasize mastery of complex subject matter; and enabling teachers to improve their instructional methods.

A 1995 report by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (CORS) called "Successful School Restructuring" concluded that while no individual structural reform guarantees student improvement, there are identifiable elements of restructuring that contribute to success. Based on data from more than 1,500 schools nationwide and field studies of 44 schools in 16 states, CORS concludes that increased student achievement is linked to:

- Shared governance that gives teachers a role in setting school policy and influencing practice;
- Structures such as teaching teams that increase and encourage collaboration among teachers;
- Professional development that puts skills into a context consistent with the overall school mission and restructuring efforts;
- Autonomy that allows schools to develop and implement a process of change tied to high standards;
- Size, which contributes to a culture of trust and communication; and
- Parent and community involvement in and support for school programs and restructuring efforts.

Schools working with Design Teams have found the practices discussed in these four studies at the core of their work. The designs are built on a proven research base of what works for students. While each Design Team offers a unique vision and implementation plan tailored for individual schools, all of the designs reflect the use of practices that have proven effective at helping schools improve student performance.

Demonstrating Progress

There are several ways to observe the progress of New American Schools and how partnerships between schools and Design Teams have helped students and teachers reach high standards.

1. Visit demonstration sites and talk to students, parents, teachers, and principals. They can articulate and demonstrate their experiences with implementation. Schools around the country that are working with Design Teams offer a chance to see the designs in place and learn first-hand how they have supported efforts to improve student performance.

2. Investigate the early data. It reflects improved teaching and learning in New American Schools. None of the schools working with Design Teams has requested waivers from state and local tests; all have operated as promised within the accountability systems in place in their states and districts. After three years of implementation, schools are beginning to see improvement in student achievement. In addition, most schools have experienced improvements in attendance and completion rates and a reduction in disciplinary incidents. Testimonials by parents, teachers, and students reinforce this early data.

3. Review the comprehensive data collection, analysis, and reporting plan developed by the RAND Corporation to evaluate improvements in student achievement over five years. The plan guarantees consistent, high-quality information about student achievement in New American Schools.

The following pages paint a picture of schools implementing New American Schools designs. As each design differs in the approach, pace, and sequence of implementation, the story unfolds differently in the early years of implementation. The trend is clearly positive. Schools are refocusing on student achievement, engaging students and teachers more actively and responsibly in their learning and teaching, building climates conducive to learning, involving parents and community members, and building a vision for improvement that will carry them into the next century.

For more information on specific results or implementation, please contact the individual Design Teams. Contact information is provided at the end of this booklet.

ATLAS COMMUNITIES

New American Schools

ATLAS COMMUNITIES

The ATLAS (Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for all Students) Communities design is a dynamic model for the vision and daily operation of school communities. Implementation of the design revolves around pathways, which are feeder patterns of schools serving students from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. Teams of teachers from across each pathway work together to design curriculum and assessment strategies based on locally-defined standards. In collaboration with parents and administrators, sound policies and management structures that support improved teaching and learning are implemented. Initiated by Ted Sizer of Brown University, James Comer of Yale University, Howard Gardner of Harvard University, and Janet Whitla of the Education Development Center, ATLAS Communities brings together some of the best thinking in schooling over the last 35 years.

Where is the Design in Place?

Eleven ATLAS Communities pathways or partial pathways are located in both urban and rural areas across the country, including Gorham (Maine), Norfolk (Virginia), Prince George's County (Maryland), Memphis (Tennessee), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), and Seattle, Everett, Northshore, and Shoreline (Washington).

Early Indicators of Progress

Recognition

- Norview High School, a Title I schoolwide project in Norfolk, received the 1996 Redbook Magazine Blue Ribbon School Award for innovation in the classroom. Norview was the only Virginia high school recognized in the "innovation" category.

Student Achievement

- The elementary school in a Prince George's County pathway reported that reading test scores have increased by 30 percent since 1992. The percentage of middle-school students in the same pathway scoring "satisfactory" or "excellent" on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) increased from nine to 28 percent in reading from 1992 to 1995.

- At Norview High School in Norfolk, eleventh-grade scores on the Test of Achievement Proficiency rose 15 percent in research, writing, and science--all areas directly related to the eleventh-grade exhibition tasks in the ATLAS Communities design. The number of students at the school scoring above 1000 (combined) on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) has increased over 300 percent since the school began work with the design in 1992.

- In 1995, fourth graders at the Village School in Gorham received the highest scores in the district on the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA).

- At Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis, scores on the state ninth-grade reading and math assessments went up for the fourth consecutive year.

Student and Teacher Engagement

- Enrollment in physics at Norview High School has increased from four students in 1993 to 52 students in 1996.

- Requests by teachers for staff positions at High Point High School in Prince George's County increased by 100 percent after two years of working with the ATLAS Communities design.

- At Rosemont Middle School in Norfolk, a Title I schoolwide project with a diverse student population, the dropout rate declined by 24 percent from 1994 to 1995. The number of discipline infractions fell by 15 percent from 1995 to 1996, during which time the school experienced a 46 percent increase in enrollment.

- ATLAS Communities teachers and principals in Memphis organized their own two-day summer institute in August 1997 to discuss and collaborate on lesson plans, assessments, technology integration, and team-building as an addition to their regular professional development activities. One hundred percent of these teachers also participated in year-long Study Groups.

- Teachers and students report a higher level of student engagement. Students comment that their work is different in nature, they are learning more, and their successes are more rewarding.

Changes in Curriculum, Instruction, and Organization

- Many schools have made significant changes in scheduling to boost the capacity of staff to teach effectively. Teacher-student ratios at Gorham High School have been reduced through block scheduling. The Memphis pathway created two-hour blocks of time twice a month for reflective Study Groups in which all faculty discuss their work and that of students. Norfolk created "late-arrival" days. Prince George's County schools redesigned their use of specialists so that grade-level teachers have common planning time.

- The Gorham pathway has experienced significant gains in student achievement and

community participation while reducing per-pupil operating costs to eight percent less than the state average. The superintendent supports a focus on pathways and advocates that the entire district plan and implement education on a pre-kindergarten through 12th grade basis.

- The Norfolk pathway management team developed alternative teacher accountability policies that have been adopted by the entire district. In addition, the district is considering requiring the ATLAS Communities' exhibition system district-wide.

- In all ATLAS Communities schools, teachers have been successful in using the ATLAS Curriculum Planner to develop interdisciplinary units driven by students' questions. Both experienced and novice teachers have reported that this way of teaching has improved student participation and energized their work as teachers.

Family and Community Involvement

- The Norfolk pathway established a Learning While Serving program that encourages students to spend a pre-determined amount of time each year engaging in community service. The program began with 30 students in 1994. By 1996, there was a 300 percent increase in participation, with many students on a waiting list.

- Family participation in the work of schools has increased in all established pathways. At Norview High School, parent involvement increased almost 100 percent from 1994 to 1995 in areas such as participation in student-led conferences and enrollment in literacy training at Parent Centers.

Ongoing Evaluation

A set of benchmarks guide a self-examination process in all of the ATLAS Communities. The effectiveness of the design is measured by both improvement in student achievement and each community's reflective evaluation of progress toward its goals. Student achievement is measured by tests, anecdotal records, portfolios, performances, and exhibitions as determined by the individual pathways. Other indicators of progress and the design's effectiveness include changes in school climate, improved student attendance and staff morale, changes in school policies, increased family participation in pathway activities, and the extent to which other schools in the district consider or adopt pathway policies and practices.

AUDREY COHEN COLLEGE: PURPOSE-CENTERED EDUCATION®

New American Schools

AUDREY COHEN COLLEGE: PURPOSE-CENTERED EDUCATION®

Purpose-Centered Education® focuses all student learning on a complex and meaningful Purpose. The Purpose provides an organizing structure through which students master content and skills in core academic areas and develop personal leadership and scholarship. Students achieve each semester's Purpose by planning, carrying out, and evaluating a Constructive Action,® in which they use their knowledge and skills to benefit their community and the larger world. In the early grades, each class addresses its Purpose as a group; older students plan and implement individual Constructive Actions® with teacher involvement.

Where is the Design in Place?

There are 17 Audrey Cohen College schools, located in San Diego (California), Memphis (Tennessee), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Dade County (Florida), Leland and Hollandale (Mississippi), and Seattle (Washington).

Early Indicators of Progress

Recognition

- In 1997, Treadwell High School in Memphis became the first high school in Tennessee to receive the Greater Memphis Award for Quality, rewarding enlightened and applied quality education principles and total quality management in all aspects of organization.

Student Achievement

- In 1995, students in all grade levels at Simmons Elementary School in Hollandale made substantial gains on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). From 1994 to 1995, fifth graders, who have been involved with the Audrey Cohen College system since first grade, improved their scores on the ITBS by approximately 25 points in reading, 21 points in language, and 12 points in math, despite the fact that Hollandale has the third-highest percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch out of the 153 districts in the state. By 1996, fifth graders' scores ranked third among all districts in the state in language, ninth in reading, and 16th in math.

- The scores of fourth-grade students at a San Diego elementary school improved by eleven points from spring 1994 to spring 1995 on the Stanford Achievement Test. Students in a Dade County elementary school also improved their Stanford Achievement Test scores across all grades by four points in reading comprehension, six points in math computation, and four points in math applications.

Student and Teacher Engagement

- In all participating Audrey Cohen College schools, student attendance has improved and discipline problems have decreased (as measured by decreases in the number of students referred to the principal as well as by reports from teachers and school resource specialists); these trends have been consistent since implementation began.

- Students in Audrey Cohen College schools use Constructive Actions® to improve their communities. A fourth-grade class planned and conducted a symposium in California featuring exhibits, demonstrations, activities, materials, and services such as blood pressure readings to inform community decision-makers about health issues the class thought were not being addressed. Ninth graders in Florida conducted a survey on adolescent health concerns and set up a series of speakers addressing the physical and mental health problems they identified.

Family and Community Involvement

- Over 100 community members per district, including business, non-profit, and service personnel, participated in Constructive Actions® initiated by students. The number of new businesses and institutions involved during the 1994-95 school year increased by 50 percent over prior years.

Ongoing Evaluation

Students in all Audrey Cohen College schools meet--and go beyond--local standards. The schools expect students to achieve a much more comprehensive set of standards including knowledge and skills as well as the ability to apply them to major challenges.

Beginning in the early grades, students are involved in self-assessment. They learn how to monitor their progress as they increasingly assume responsibility for their own learning. Students are assessed on how well they understand academic content and their ability to use knowledge and skills with increasing sophistication to achieve their Purposes. Teachers, community members, and students participate in the assessment process, examining a range of specific abilities that students demonstrate. Audrey Cohen College has identified the abilities a student must develop to achieve the Purposes and has developed methods for measuring these abilities.

CO-NECT SCHOOLS

New American Schools

CO-NECT SCHOOLS

The Co-NECT Schools design provides a comprehensive, technology-supported framework for school-wide and district-wide restructuring aimed at improving academic results for all students. Schools are organized around small clusters of students taught by cross-disciplinary teaching teams. Ideally, students stay in the same cluster, with the same teachers, for at least two years. Teaching and learning revolve around interdisciplinary projects that give students an opportunity to acquire critical skills and academic understanding, as defined by local performance standards. A school design team, including teachers, administrators, and parents, sets goals and monitors results. The Co-NECT Design Team also assists with district-wide technology planning and the development and implementation of performance-based school accountability models.

Where is the Design in Place?

Co-NECT Schools is currently working with 56 schools located in Dade and Broward Counties (Florida), Memphis (Tennessee), Cincinnati (Ohio), Philadelphia and Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), Worcester (Massachusetts), Juneau (Alaska), and San Antonio (Texas).

Early Indicators of Progress

Recognition

- The New England League of Middle Schools designated the Accelerated Learning Laboratory (ALL) School in Worcester one of six exemplary middle schools in New England for 1994. Eighty percent of the students attending the ALL School qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

- For its leadership in integrating technology into the learning process, Oak Forest Elementary School in Memphis was one of 100 schools nationwide named an Apple Distinguished School by Apple Computer.

Student Achievement

- Co-NECT School students in Dade County are making significant gains on the statewide Florida Writes! test. At Campbell Drive Middle School the percentage of students scoring a 3.0 or higher on a six point scale rose from 14 percent in 1994 to 72 percent in 1997. These results came in a year when scores on the state writing assessment dropped district-wide. Campbell Drive was the only school in Region IV to show improvement, and was the second most improved middle school in Dade County. Riviera Middle School students also made significant gains on the Florida Writes! test with the percentage of students scoring a 3.0 or higher on a six point scale rising from 59 percent in 1994 to 89 percent in 1997.

- Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) scores at the ALL School increased from 1994 to 1996. These tests are administered in the fourth, eighth, and tenth grades, and measure student knowledge in math, reading, science, and social studies. The average fourth-grade open-ended math score was 1550 out of a possible 1600 points. Science scores were higher than the district average (1370 compared to 1290). Among eighth graders at the school, there was an increase of 100 or more points in all four subject areas.

- At Idlewild Elementary School in Memphis, fourth graders' scores on the state-wide writing assessment increased from 11 percent proficient in 1994 to 39 percent proficient in 1995.

Student and Teacher Engagement

- Students from the ALL School have put their computer technology skills to practical use by designing web pages for local businesses. Calling themselves the Worcester Educational Business of Homepages, students have designed homepages for the city of Worcester, the city's public schools, a health care clinic, and other institutions. Originating last year as a Junior Achievement project, the work is done as an after-school elective, with students earning $100 to $200 per homepage. The money goes into a technology fund for the school.

- Campbell Drive Middle School in Dade County recently organized a "Tech Squad" to help train other students and teachers to use various software applications and maintain the school's website. Campbell Drive serves a student population that is 54 percent Hispanic, 34 percent African American, and ten percent Caucasian. Approximately 83 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

- Most Co-NECT Schools sites have experienced increased student engagement in learning activities as evidenced by fewer student behavioral problems and disciplinary incidents, higher levels of student enjoyment of and adeptness with the design's emphasis on technology, and greater student ownership over their project work. Teachers report that students assume new responsibility for their own learning.

- Teachers in multi-grade classrooms have observed mentoring behavior from the older students and more mature behavior from the younger students.

Family and Community Involvement

- All Co-NECT Schools demonstration sites have reported a marked increase in parent involvement and support for the schools' programs. At the ALL School, 95 percent of the

parents regularly attend parent-teacher conferences and a parent now co-chairs the school governance council with the principal. Other parents participate in classroom management training to equip them to support teachers' participation in professional development activities. A survey taken in 1995 indicates that parents are particularly happy with the increased opportunities for students to use technology, the school's project-based curriculum, and the multi-age grouping policy.

- Parents at the Phoenix School, a high school in Juneau, have formed a non-profit foundation to support the design. Volunteers share expertise with students, monitor computer labs, share resources, plan and implement field experiences, and help in evaluation of student projects.

- The Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School in Juneau has witnessed a significant increase in community agency involvement in conjunction with student projects. Agencies involved with the school include the Forest Service, Alaska Discovery, Princess Tours, Public Health, Juneau Empire, the Fish and Game Service, and various local artists and writers.

Ongoing Evaluation

In addition to ongoing tracking of performance on state and local assessments, Co-NECT Schools has two primary strategies for measuring and tracking progress in schools implementing the design. First, the Design Team plans to continue to work with CSTEEP to track student performance in reading, writing, science, and math at all Co-NECT Schools.

Second, teams of Co-NECT teachers will visit new sites in Memphis and Dade County as part of the Critical Friends program, through which participating teachers provide support, advice, and guidance to one another. On these visits, team members attend classes, interview principals and teachers, "shadow" students, study samples of student work, and speak with parents and other members of the community. At the end of each visit, the Critical Friends team presents a confidential consensus report to the district and the participating schools, identifying areas of progress as well as remaining challenges.

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING OUTWARD BOUND

New American Schools

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING OUTWARD BOUND

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) offers a curriculum centered on "learning expeditions" developed by the teachers in each school, with the support of the ELOB school designers and national faculty. Learning expeditions are purposeful, rigorous, in-depth studies of a single theme or topic. Usually interdisciplinary, they revolve around projects and performances, which often take students outside of the school and bring the community inside the school. They involve challenge, teamwork, and learning by doing, and are designed to meet and exceed state and district academic standards. They aim to develop not only intellectual ability, including mastery of core academic content and skills, but fitness, craftsmanship, and character. All students keep portfolios of their work, and the schools develop a "culture of revision" in which everyone is expected to settle for nothing less than their best work. The design requires deep and focused instruction, flexible block-scheduling, heterogeneous grouping, and assignments that keep teachers with the same students for two or more years.

Where is the Design in Place?

There are currently 45 schools implementing ELOB. They are located in Dubuque (Iowa), Portland (Maine), Denver (Colorado), New York City (New York), Boston and Newburyport (Massachusetts), Decatur (Georgia), San Antonio (Texas), Memphis (Tennessee), Cincinnati (Ohio), Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Annapolis (Maryland), Dade County (Florida), Seattle and Edmonds (Washington), and Santa Barbara (California).

Early Indicators of Progress

Recognition

- Midway Elementary School was one of five Cincinnati schools chosen for an Excellence in Education Award in the 1996-97 school year. All three ELOB elementary schools were among the finalists chosen out of 79 schools for the award, which is granted by the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative to outstanding schools that are leading the way to improve student performance and achievement.

- Christine Robertson, principal of Bramble Developmental Academy in Cincinnati, was named Ohio's Principal of the Year for the 1996-97 school year, and Mike McCarthy, principal of King Middle School in Portland, received the same honor for the state of Maine.

- In 1995, *The New York Times* profiled the School for the Physical City, located in the heart of New York City in an area with an ethnically mixed student population, noting its successes with a traditionally low-achieving school population.

- The report of the accreditation visit by the North Central Association Visiting Resource Team in April 1997 concluded that the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) in Denver is "*well on its way to becoming a powerful example of educational practice for the state of Colorado and the nation. We were greatly impressed with the level of commitment, respect, and thought about learning that both students and teachers demonstrated during our visit. Nearly every student interviewed by the visiting team could articulate what they were learning and where they were going. . . . It is clear that RMSEL is a thoughtful, caring, and respectful community of educators! We look forward to following the school's progress.*"

Student Achievement

- King Middle School in Portland achieved dramatic gains on the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA), surpassing the rate of change statewide. King students went from performing below the bottom of the range for demographically similar schools in six curriculum areas in 1995, to performing above the top of the range in all six areas one year later. King students averaged a 59-point increase in their scores, compared to a statewide average gain of only 15 points. In 1997, King's reading, math, and language arts scores increased again, by an average of an additional 25 points.

- In New York City, three-year longitudinal comparisons show significant increases on the Degrees of Reading Power Test in grades seven and eight at the School for the Physical City, placing the school 29th out of the city's 226 junior high schools in reading in 1996. Some 75 percent of the students were reading at or above grade level, compared to only 47 percent across the school system as a whole.

- In 1996, fifth-grade students at Clairemont Elementary School in Decatur scored at the 8.1 grade equivalent in math on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the 7.6 grade equivalent in reading after its third year of implementation. Clairemont fifth graders also outperformed both the school district and the state in all curriculum areas on the Georgia Curriculum Based Assessment Test in 1996, scoring at the 99th percentile in reading, the 95th percentile in math, the 98th percentile in science, and the 95th percentile in social studies.

- In Boston, the Rafael Hernandez School ranked 11th in math and 17th in reading out of the city's 76 elementary schools on the Stanford-9 test in the percentage of fifth graders reading above grade level. The Hernandez School is a two-way bilingual school that serves a student population that is 59 percent Hispanic, 27 percent African American, and 14 percent Caucasian; 73 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

- McKinley Elementary School's fourth graders improved their scores on Cincinnati's Fourth-Grade Proficiency Test by 26 percentage points in math, 23 in citizenship, and six in reading from 1995 to 1996. In all five areas tested, McKinley's fourth graders achieved a higher rate of proficiency than the district and state average. Sixth graders at McKinley scored higher than the district and state average in reading (89 percent proficiency) and science (46 percent proficiency).

Student and Teacher Engagement

An independent three-year evaluation of ELOB in ten pilot schools, conducted by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), and a smaller study by a team from the University of Colorado School of Education, have provided data on all aspects of implementation and results of the design. The information in this section comes primarily from these two studies.

- The AED study found that students were more motivated to achieve. Two-thirds of both sixth-grade and high-school students said expeditions helped them learn. The majority of students and teachers reported that students were actively engaged in learning, worked hard both to plan and carry out expeditions, and benefited from working collaboratively. Eighty percent of sixth graders and 85 percent of high-school students felt that how much they learned in the school depended on their own efforts.

- Teachers believe ELOB's program of professional development has improved their ability to teach students of different ability levels in the same class, be more of a guide or facilitator in helping students discover what they are supposed to learn rather than an expert providing the "right information," assess students academically and socially, learn from their colleagues, use parents and outside experts in the classroom, be more confident as teachers, and renew and rediscover themselves as learners.

Changes in Curriculum, Instruction, and Organization

- Schools have made significant changes to their structure and organization to support ELOB's approach to teaching and learning. For example, at Herff Elementary in San Antonio, school leadership modified the schedule so that every Thursday the entire faculty has a three-hour block of planning time. Students at Jack Elementary and King Middle schools in Portland stay with the same team of teachers for two years, which builds important relationships between teachers, students, and parents.

- Teachers in ELOB schools reported in AED surveys that students attained a high quality of student work in learning expeditions, often higher than they had ever attained in the past. Because learning expeditions provide sufficient time for students to do multiple drafts of their work, teachers said the final product was often of such high quality that it met not only school district, but professional standards.

to do multiple drafts of their work, teachers said the final product was often of such high quality that it met not only school district, but professional standards.

- In every ELOB school, there have been significant changes in standards and assessment practices, particularly at the classroom level. Teachers have begun to develop portfolio systems and are initiating practices such as student self-assessment and reflection and the development of strong criteria for project work.

Ongoing Evaluation

Reflection, goal-setting, and planning have always been part of the Expeditionary Learning design. Within the past year, ELOB has worked with schools to develop a more formal and intensive process of assessing progress. This year, each ELOB school will conduct a self-review to assess and reflect on its progress against its own objectives, ELOB's implementation benchmarks, and district standards, and set continuous improvement goals for the next year. External peer reviews are conducted at each school every three to four years.

LOS ANGELES LEARNING CENTERS

New American Schools

LOS ANGELES LEARNING CENTERS

The Los Angeles Learning Centers (LALC) is a comprehensive kindergarten-through-12 model for urban schools. LALC is organized around three main components: *Curriculum and Instruction* ensures that all students are taught in a well-organized and effective learning environment strongly connected to its community; *Learning Supports* addresses the health and well-being of students and their families to help them overcome barriers to student learning; and *Governance and Management* engages parents, staff, and community members in decision-making to ensure that the Learning Centers can improve and evolve. The advanced use of technology supports each component of the Learning Centers design. This design was developed by the Los Angeles Unified School District, United Teachers of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles Educational Partnership.

Where is the Design in Place?

There are two LALC demonstration sites located in south-central Los Angeles (California): Foshay Learning Center and Elizabeth Street Learning Center. Two additional schools began implementation in 1996: 32nd Street/USC Magnet High School and Corona Avenue Elementary School.

Early Indicators of Progress

Recognition

- In 1989 Foshay was identified as one of the worst-performing middle schools in the district; today it is a California Distinguished School. Its principal, Howard Lappin, was named the 1997 California Principal of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators.

Student Achievement

- Of the 67 students who graduated from Foshay in June 1997, 31 students took Advanced Placement exams in 1996, with 29 students passing the exam and 21 receiving a top score.

- All graduating seniors from Elizabeth Street and 95 percent of seniors from Foshay will attend college or another institution of higher education in the fall of 1997.

Changes in Curriculum, Instruction, and Organization

- Elizabeth Street Learning Center is a national model for a Learning Supports System on campus. The school houses a family center, complete health clinic, parent volunteer program, and an array of parent education classes with nearly 400 parents enrolled.

- Foshay and Elizabeth Street combined have more than 700 computers with Internet access. At Foshay, technology committees meet weekly to pursue implementation of the school's aggressive technology plan. Product Development Centers, where students, teachers, and parents use technology to create their own projects, are in operation at both sites. In addition, each site has an Information Technology Academy which provides interdisciplinary curriculum and school-to-career transition programs for students in grades ten to 12.

- Foshay and Elizabeth Street contain a total of five academies: two in health, two in information and technology, and one in finance.

Family and Community Engagement

- Foshay has received a three-year Healthy Start grant and is currently collaborating with California Hospital as the service provider for its health center, which began operation in July 1997.

- St. Francis Hospital is a partner in the health clinic at Elizabeth Street. The clinic is open seven days a week and provides a full range of services.

- Foshay and Elizabeth Street both provide coordinated health-related services for students and families. Each site uses a technology-based system developed by the Los Angeles Educational Partnership known as FASTnet with a Client Tracking System to coordinate service delivery and follow-up.

Ongoing Evaluation

Consistent use of the Stanford-9 and Aprenda Batteries of Achievement tests provide baseline data for measuring student progress at each site. At the high-school level, course grades, Advanced Placement achievement, and other standardized test results are available through a database maintained by the Los Angeles Unified School District. The stability of the entire student population is observed to determine the effects of decreased transience on student achievement. Implementation teams at each school and the LALC Design Team meet annually to assess progress in each area of the LALC design.

MODERN RED SCHOOLHOUSE

New American Schools

MODERN RED SCHOOLHOUSE

The Modern Red Schoolhouse (MRSh) design encourages teachers to identify and nurture the potential that exists in every child. Like its nineteenth-century namesake, MRSh is based on the belief that mastery of subject matter and basic skills is the only acceptable goal for all children. Unlike the little red schoolhouse, however, the design incorporates advanced technology as a critical tool to restructure and strengthen both instruction and management in schools. The Design Team has developed a set of high standards and helps schools create individualized plans to help all students achieve them.

Where is the Design in Place?

Thirty-three schools are implementing the MRSh design; they are located in Memphis (Tennessee), Dade and Broward Counties (Florida), Indianapolis, Taylorsville, Bartholomew County, Greentown, and Beech Grove (Indiana), LeRoy (Illinois), The Bronx (New York), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), and San Antonio (Texas).

Early Indicators of Progress

Student Achievement

- Consistently, elementary school sites are showing an increase in average student achievement scores (normal curve equivalents) in the early grades, the largest of which have occurred at urban sites. Hansberry Elementary School in The Bronx is a Title I schoolwide project that serves a student population that is 40 percent African American and 60 percent Hispanic. The percentage of Hansberry students who passed New York State's Essential Skills Test rose from 22 to 52 percent in reading and from 47 to 82 percent in math from 1993 to 1995.

- At Northside Middle School in Bartholomew County, student scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) rose from 23 percent in 1994 to 68 percent in 1996 in reading and from 34 percent to 72 percent in science.

- In Indiana, three MRSh schools showed significant increases from 1993 to 1995 in the percentage of second-graders meeting state essential skill levels. The percentage at Emerson Elementary rose from 12 to 37 percent; at Central Elementary, from 64 to 73 percent; and at Taylorsville Elementary, from 68 to 74 percent.

- Travis Elementary in San Antonio, with 100 percent of its students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, reports significant gains in scores on the 1997 Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). Third-grade students gained two percent in reading and 13 percent in math; fourth-grade students gained 33 percent in reading, 29 percent in math,

and 21 percent in writing; and fifth-grade students gained 12 percent in math.

- At Rozelle Creative and Performing Arts School in Memphis, all students met or exceeded 90 percent of the district median percentiles on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) in 1996. Also, Rozelle's fourth-grade writing proficiency scores improved by more than 100 percent. Rozelle is an urban school with 96 percent of the students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

- Since 1992, average scores on the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) have risen from the 60th to the 70th percentile at Central Elementary School in Beech Grove. In 1996, sixth-grade students at Beech Grove Middle School achieved a 13 percent increase in total battery scores compared to their 1995 results.

Student and Teacher Engagement

- The majority of teachers surveyed at elementary school sites reported that: the design had "a lot" of impact on student engagement (66 percent); the curriculum had a positive impact on student achievement (90 percent); the parent involvement component of the design had a positive impact on student achievement (79 percent); the use of computers for instruction and classroom management had a positive impact on achievement (90 percent); and they are strongly satisfied with their role as professionals (100 percent).

Changes in Curriculum, Instruction, and Organization

- Teachers at Treasure Island Elementary School in Dade County have made significant changes in the way they use time in their school. Thirteen after-school classes are offered and attended voluntarily by over 20 percent of the student body. These classes include both enrichment and support topics such as creative writing, math manipulatives, and Spanish literature. A Saturday Academy focuses on instruction and practice in test-taking skills.

- Robert Frost Elementary School's MRSh accountability plan is used as a model for all Indianapolis public schools.

- At Hansberry Elementary School, the teacher leadership team and building administration have successfully reorganized the school day and added an after-school bus service to capture 27 additional minutes of instructional time each day.

Family and Community Involvement

- Robert Frost Elementary School achieved 100 percent participation in parent conferences in both the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years.

Ongoing Evaluation

Each year a more exhaustive assessment of student learning occurs. Students at new sites take a national comparison examination which allows comparison of student achievement at MRSh sites with national data. Baseline data from prior years will allow comparisons of changes in each school's performance over time.

In addition to the national comparison exams, several sites will pilot the MRSh capstone units, which are combined units of instruction and assessment. These performance-based units provide an additional measure of a school's performance as well as consistent measures of student learning across MRSh sites. In 1997, all students at Taylorsville Elementary School completed at least a portion of a capstone unit, often adapted to their grade-level requirements. Eastern Elementary in Greentown will pilot this process in the fall of 1997, joining students at Robert Frost Elementary as capstone pioneers. Implementing sites in Memphis and San Antonio will also pilot capstone units this year.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR RESTRUCTURING EDUCATION

New American Schools

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR RESTRUCTURING EDUCATION

The National Alliance for Restructuring Education (NARE), a major initiative of the National Center on Education and the Economy, is a partnership of states, school districts, and leading national organizations. Its emphasizes standards-based reform with a focus on the redesign of schools and school systems to enable students to meet high standards of achievement. To help all students reach that goal, the Alliance and its partners have: developed high standards of student performance in English language arts, math, science, and applied learning and are working to build better ways to measure that performance; redesigned curriculum and instruction so they are linked to standards; integrated technology into instruction to help students learn at high levels; redesigned the transition from school to work; organized health and social services to improve support for children and families; restructured school administration for high performance; and worked to engage parents and the public in the reform effort. The Alliance design is results-driven; contribution to student achievement is the only criterion for any activity in the system.

Where is the Design in Place?

The Alliance partners represent a diverse group of states, districts, and schools. NARE works with districts and their schools in many different environments (urban, suburban, and rural) organized in different ways (whole districts or clusters of schools within a district, for example). The Alliance tailors its services to the needs of its partners, targeting the areas that a site has chosen for improvement. The widely varying circumstances of NARE's partners demonstrate the flexibility of this approach to reform; improvements in student performance bear out the efficacy of the Alliance design in different settings.

In 1997, the Alliance is operating in more than 300 schools in 25 jurisdictions, including the states of Arkansas and Washington and the districts of Chicago (Illinois), Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), San Diego (California), Rochester and White Plains (New York), and Hershey (Pennsylvania).

NARE's newest partners include Hanford (California), Hatboro-Horsham (Pennsylvania), and the Hawaii State Department of Education.

Several Alliance districts, including Pittsburgh and the Everett and Northshore school districts in Washington state, are restructuring their district operations to provide substantially more flexibility and autonomy to local schools while holding them accountable for meeting student performance targets. States in the Alliance have adopted comprehensive legislation focusing on high standards for student performance that provides support for schools in achieving the standards.

Early Indicators of Progress

Student Achievement

To provide its sites with a method of gauging the kind of student results the Alliance believes are important, the Alliance's partner, New Standards, is building a system that will measure student skills and knowledge against challenging standards. The system includes performance standards, which indicate the level of performance students should demonstrate in the four core subjects; reference examinations, which assess student performance in core subjects; and a portfolio system, which enables classroom instruction to be driven by the standards. Most of the system is currently in place. New Standards has drafted the performance standards and has administered reference examinations in English language arts and math. Many Alliance sites took part in the reference exams and have baseline data on student performance in those subjects. In the future, the Alliance will be able to report progress based on those baseline assessments. The Alliance sites also took part in the field test of the portfolio system.

- The best available data on student performance in the National Alliance comes from Kentucky where the state assessment system is, in fact, tied to high standards and annually reports results from individual schools. Moreover, the Kentucky Education Reform Act includes a strong incentive system that rewards significant improvement. The Kentucky results suggest that the Alliance work is paying off by helping schools change to improve student performance. Of the 15 original Alliance schools in Kentucky, 13 (87 percent) earned cash awards in 1995, the first year of the program, compared with 38 percent of schools state-wide.

- Kennedy Elementary School in Louisville, Kentucky has seen a 25 percent increase in recent Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS) scores across all grades. From 1992 to 1996, an average of 74 percent of Kentucky Alliance schools met or exceeded their performance goals--some of the toughest performance goals in the country.

- Approximately 80 percent of the Alliance schools in Chicago improved their scores significantly on city-wide tests; at least one of the Alliance schools tripled its scores.

Student and Teacher Engagement

- Teachers using Alliance standards-driven units of study report that their students are much more engaged in their studies and are producing higher quality work than ever before.

Ongoing Evaluation

As part of the Alliance's strategic planning for results process, schools are collecting data on

student performance and analyzing it to plan for the coming year. The data will include results from the New Standards reference examinations which provide a measure of student performance against high standards. Schools are also using Alliance diagnostic tools to assess their current practices and plans to achieve their desired performance results.

ROOTS AND WINGS

New American Schools

ROOTS AND WINGS

Roots and Wings is a comprehensive restructuring program for elementary schools. The program provides innovative curricula, instructional methods, and professional development in reading, writing/language arts, math, social studies, and science. The curricula emphasize cooperative learning, simulations, experiments, and frequent assessments. Other elements of the design include reading tutors for primary-grade children who are struggling and a family support team to address non-academic problems. The "roots" of Roots and Wings are derived from the widely-used Success For All program, which focuses on reading, writing, and language arts for elementary grades, along with tutoring, family support, and other programmatic elements. The "wings" components include a constructivist math program and an integrated social studies/science program.

Where is the Design in Place?

Roots and Wings was piloted first in four schools in rural St. Mary's County, Maryland. Today there are more than 750 schools nationwide implementing Success for All, and 100 of these are adding the math, science, and social studies curricula that, together with Success for All, constitute the Roots and Wings program.

Early Indicators of Progress

Student Achievement

The assessment of Roots and Wings in the pilot schools involves measuring changes over time on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), Maryland's state-of-the-art performance assessment, in which third and fifth graders are asked to design and carry out experiments, write compositions in various genres, read and respond to extended passages, and use math to solve complex problems. Student responses are rated by state contractors against well-validated rubrics on a five-point scale.

- The four Roots and Wings pilot schools in St. Mary's County showed extraordinary gains on the MSPAP. From 1993 to 1996, third graders' scores climbed from 24 percent to 38 percent at "excellent" or "satisfactory" in reading, 16 percent to 38 percent in language, 16 percent to 41 percent in math, and 19 percent to 33 percent in science. In the fifth grade, scores jumped from 18 percent to 34 percent at "excellent" or "satisfactory" in reading, 26 percent to 54 percent in math, 23 percent to 51 percent in language, and 28 percent to 55 percent in science. All of these gains were substantially greater than the gains made by other Maryland students. These four high-poverty schools were far below state averages in 1993, but by 1996, they met or exceeded state averages on all scales in all grades assessed.

- Before implementing the Roots and Wings design, Garfield Elementary School in Everett, Washington was ranked among the lowest of the district's fifteen elementary schools. During its first year of implementation, Garfield experienced an almost two-fold jump in the number of first through fifth graders reading at or above grade level. At the beginning of the school year, 40 percent of students were reading at grade level; by March, 73 percent of students were reading at or above grade level.

- At Crest Hills Elementary School in Cincinnati, Ohio, fourth-grade scores on the district's proficiency test increased by 15 percentage points in math and 13 in citizenship from 1995 to 1996. In writing, students tested at a proficiency rate of 71 percent, higher than the district average. Across all grades, Crest Hills students showed gains equal to or greater than other schools in the district in 17 of 18 categories.

- At Lackland City Elementary School in San Antonio, Texas, students made substantial gains on the math sections of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) in comparison to previous cohorts in the same school. The percentage of students passing more than doubled in the third grade, from 37 percent to 77 percent. Fourth-grade scores increased from 34 percent to 61 percent passing. Although Lackland City students are far more impoverished than the district average (92 percent eligible for free or reduced-price lunch versus 42 percent for the district), its students had TAAS passing rates higher than the district average in third grade (77 percent to 74 percent) and fifth grade (87 percent to 82 percent). In 1995, 85 percent of students passed the grade-level objectives in math on the TAAS, an increase of 35 points over the previous year, when the school began implementation of MathWings.

- After one year in MathWings, total math scores on the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) increased by three points among third graders, six points among fourth graders, and nine points among fifth graders at El Vista Elementary School in Modesto, California, a Title I schoolwide project where 92 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

- Reading scores are up on state-mandated tests at Hawthorne Elementary in Baltimore County, Maryland. Seventy-five percent of second graders were performing at grade level after only one year of using the design, as measured in the fall of 1995. In 1997, Hawthorne and another Baltimore County Roots and Wings school, Dundalk Elementary, were recognized for outstanding gains on a county test of early reading.

- Students at Florida City Elementary School in Dade County, Florida have achieved significant increases in test scores since implementing the design; for example, first graders' scores rose from the 12th percentile to the 28th percentile in two years on a state-mandated reading test. Ninety-six percent of Florida City Elementary students are eligible

for free or reduced-price lunch. Florida City Elementary serves a student population that is 51 percent Hispanic, 40 percent African American, and nine percent Caucasian.

- An evaluation of three Roots and Wings schools in Dade County showed a gain of seven percentile points in grades one and two while matched control schools lost five points on the Stanford Achievement Test. In grades two and three, Roots and Wings students lost one percentile point while controls lost eight.

Ongoing Evaluation

A rigorous evaluation of Roots and Wings comparing student achievement outcomes in Roots and Wings schools with control schools is underway in three schools in Dade County and four schools in Memphis, Tennessee. These evaluations will use individually-administered reading measures, writing samples, and performance assessments. In these and several other districts, scores on district-administered standardized tests and performance assessments also will be collected to assess student progress over time.

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New American Schools

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